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# THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACHED JULY 29, 1784,

AT THE

Parish Church of OLNEY, BUCKS,

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By THOMAS SCOTT,  
CURATE of OLNEY and WESTON-UNDERWOOD.

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*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were  
destroyed of the destroyer.—1 COR. X. 10.*

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## P R E F A C E.

**M**ANKIND in general look at the dark side of their circumstances, and the supposed bright side of their character; whence arise pride, discontent, and murmurs dishonourable to God, and tormenting to themselves. But true religion teaches us to consider the dark side of our character, and the bright side of our circumstances; and, reflecting how many undeserved comforts we enjoy, to exercise humble gratitude and chearful praise.

However, there are but few, comparatively, who are truly religious; and those few are but in part influenced by their principles; and are often repining, when they might be praising: the world is full of discontent, which ought to be full of gratitude. Well then might the psalmist repeatedly say, "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonders to the children of men." We have abundant cause so to do; it is very reasonable we should; it is very pleasant to be thus employed; therefore much to be desired by all, who love God and man: but the most have *no* heart to it, and the rest but *little*.

This seemed to be the case even with the apparently religious part of our land, in respect of our national mercies. Many, during the late war, joined with seeming earnestness in prayers for deliverance and peace; who, I fear, have not rendered unto the Lord thanks equally cordial,



now he hath answered their prayers. They forget our deservings, and our dangers; and because we are not that flourishing nation we were; because the peace is not so honourable as they wished; they indulge a spirit of discontent, quarrel with men and measures, and have no heart to bless God for the security, liberty, and privileges we still enjoy.

I was sure before I had purposely considered the particulars, that the Lord had been very kind to us, and had an undoubted claim upon us for cordial thanksgiving. Under this persuasion, I rejoiced that at length a day of thanksgiving was appointed. Improving the occasion, I meditated the following subject for the edification of my own congregation, respecting the duty of the day. In preaching, the case appeared to me so plain and uncontrovertible, and I afterwards found it was so convincing to many, or most present, that I concluded it might answer some good end, if made public. They who heard the sermon delivered, will easily perceive I have taken the liberty to make several alterations; yet they will find it for substance the same sermon, so far at least, as to warrant the title. The *candid* perusal of others is requested. It contains plain truths, in plain language, originally preached to plain people, and now published for the benefit of such. I have endeavoured not to offend the political principles of any man; and I hope no moderate man of any party will be offended. I would give as little offence as possible on such an occasion to any religious party: but if any expression has escaped me, which may have that tendency, I hope it will  
not



not prejudice a real christian against the other part. If the Lord be pleased to bless the publication, and to employ it as an instrument of his glory, in exciting true christians of every denomination to abound more in praise and prayer, I shall have then an ample recompence.

THOMAS SCOTT.

OLNEY, *August* 7, 1784.

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## PSALM CVI. 43, 44.

*Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.*

THE knowledge of God, and of ourselves, is beyond all comparison, the most important kind of knowledge: and this knowledge is especially communicated to us in the word of God; which is indeed a history of God and of man, discovering to us the real character of God, and the real character of man. This is done in the plainest and simplest manner, by historical relations of God's conduct towards man in numerous instances, and under a vast variety of circumstances; and on the other hand, of man's conduct towards God, under a like variety of circumstances. The result of the whole is this; it appears that God is ever disposed by his own essential excellency, to act with consummate wisdom, justice, holiness, patience, condescension, love, mercy, truth, and faithfulness; is therefore of a most glorious and lovely character, and worthy of all that love and honour he demands: that on the other hand, man is ever disposed to rebellion, ingratitude, obstinacy, and enmity; is therefore of a very base and odious character, and justly deserving of the abomination and indignation of a holy God.

This trial of mankind was especially made in God's dealings with the people of Israel, who being descended



descended from such pious ancestors, planted wholly "a right seed," were an unexceptionable sample of human nature. We have the abstract of it in this psalm, which begins and ends with, "Praise ye the Lord," and is taken up with a history of God's persevering kindness to Israel, and Israel's persevering ingratitude to God: for the worse our conduct and character is, the more adorable and praise-worthy is God in his kindness to us. The same scene, in some measure, is acted over again in every age of the world, in every nation under heaven, in every man's own experience. Had we an history equally impartial and faithful, of any other people, or any single person, in proportion as that people, or individual, was favoured of God with the favour he shewed to Israel, the base ingratitude of human nature would equally appear; and in proportion would the loveliness of God, and the odiousness of man be illustrated. And truly, he who has best learned to love and admire God, to lothe and abhor himself, and can most sincerely adopt the words of holy Job, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" is the greatest proficient in true religion.

The substance of this instructive psalm is compressed in the words I have read to you; "Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry." The historical part of the Old Testament I refer you to, for the illustration of the words,  
as

as spoken with reference to Israel; of which this psalm, and the foregoing, are an excellent compendium. But as God and his law,\* and his measures of government, and providence, are the same from generation to generation, and as human nature is the same also, I trust you will easily perceive the propriety of improving them for our edification on the present occasion.

After many former deliverances, the people of Israel were brought low for their iniquity. Nations are brought low, when their numbers are greatly reduced by pestilences, famines, or other desolating judgments: when the inhabitants are detained in captivity, or sold into slavery: when successful armies of hostile invaders spread terror and carnage through the land: when civil discord excites them to murder one another by unnatural war. A nation is brought low, when, deprived of the invaluable privilege of a free government, according to equitable laws impartially executed, it groans under the yoke of tyranny: while the covetousness or caprice, the ambition or cruelty, the revenge or jealousy of one, or few, keep millions in perpetual alarm, and expose them to continued oppression and persecution. A nation is brought low, when its wealth is diminished, its resources exhausted, its expences increased, its commerce and trade ruined; its poor without employment, and burthened with taxes, left to the fatal necessity of starving, begging, or stealing; and its wealthy traders reduced to indigence and bankruptcy.

In these, and many other respects, nations once  
B
flourishing

\* I mean his moral law, the eternal rule of right and wrong, of sin and holiness.



flourishing are brought low, are deprived of the blessings they enjoyed at home; and the consequence they possessed abroad, and dwindle into insignificance, dependance, and wretchedness.

This premised, I observe, 1. That nations are thus brought low for iniquity, by the righteous judgment of God, whom they have provoked by their counsels. Let philosophers and politicians search out the secondary causes of such declensions in the prosperity of empires: it is allowed they have advanced many things ingenious, rational, and instructive, on the subject. But this is not my province, nor so much your present concern. 'Tis mine to speak, and your's to hear, what the word of God contains for our instruction and direction in the duty of the day: to this let us confine our attention.—Angels sinned, and by sin were brought low, even from the summit of created exaltation, to the depth of endless contempt and misery. By one man “ sin entered into the world, and death “ by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for “ that all have sinned.” Thus low, even to the grave, hath sin brought our whole human race: lower still we had all sunk, even with fallen angels, into the lowest hell, had not the glorious Emanuel come, and borne our sins in his own body on the tree: yet even thus low will sin finally bring all that live and die impenitent and unbelieving. The same evil brings nations low:—when they provoke God by their sins, he stirs up enemies against them, he permits discord to prevail, he infatuates their wisest counsellors, he intimidates their most valiant commanders; he disappoints their best concerted projects; he lets them know, “ that the race is “ not



“ not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong :  
 “ but that he doth what he will in the army of  
 “ heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the  
 “ earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto  
 “ him, what doest thou ? ”

Not only the dealings of God with his own peculiar people ; but the prophecies of the Old Testament, denounced against the neighbouring nations for their ungodliness and unrighteousness, and so awfully accomplished in their destruction, one by the sword of another, sufficiently prove and illustrate my observation.

But, 2. I observe, however, that God doth more especially deal thus with those nations, who are most favoured with the light of divine revelation, and make the most avowed profession of true religion. In his conduct towards Israel, he not only considered their behaviour, but also took into the account his written word entrusted to them ; his lively ordinances administered among them ; the prophets from age to age raised up to admonish, reprove, and instruct them ; his former favour to their nation ; his present watchful care over them : and he dealt with them accordingly. “ You only  
 “ have I known amongst all the families of the  
 “ earth ; therefore will I punish you for all your  
 “ iniquities,” Amos iii. 2. Thus will he deal with other nations also ; in proportion to the favour shewn them, and the light afforded them, as well as the sins they have committed against him.—Where much is given, much is required ; and every sin is aggravated in proportion to the wilfulness and ingratitude contained in it. “ He  
 “ that knew his Lord’s will and did it not, shall

“ be beaten with many stripes.” And God will evermore shew his impartiality, and evince that there is no people or person in such a sense his favourite, as that he should, on that account, connive at sin in them. He hates iniquity in all with perfect hatred, but most abhors it in those who are nearest to him; because it is really in them most hateful, and his judgment is always according to truth. Therefore “ spare not, “ and begin at my sanctuary,” is his commission to the executioners of his awful vengeance. Thus doth he preclude all hope of impunity in sin, when he so severely punishes his peculiar people. And thus likewise he, in the wisest manner, serves the designs of his love to them. He brings them low, to prevent their destruction: by correction he preserves them from being disinherited: his peculiar people, as well nations as individuals, are chastised of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world. The Lord will not forsake his people, therefore will he visit their offences with the rod. Nations, who profess his truth, he is slow to leave: leaves gradually, and, as it were, unwillingly; and therefore he will be sure to bring them low for their iniquity, that he may bring them to repentance.

3. Then, I observe, that God hath brought these nations low for their iniquity, by the late calamitous war. Let those, who look no higher than instruments, dispute about the authors of our troubles: you and I, my fellow-christians, should acknowledge God’s justice in them, and blame our own sins. Many times God hath delivered us, No nation hath ever been more entirely delivered.

or



or repeatedly preserved by the providence of God from tyranny and despotism, than Britain. No nation hath been indulged with greater prosperity, or with such long-continued exemptions from famines, pestilences, earthquakes, or the sword of war ravaging our fields. We have been highly favoured with religious light, and liberty: the opportunity, and full freedom of learning and doing the will of God, and rejoicing in his salvation. God's persevering kindness to Israel has been renewed in his kindness to our land: and, alas! we have re-acted their provocations. So that none but an infidel can be at a loss for the origin of our calamities. "We have provoked God by our counsel, and are brought low for our iniquity."—Compare the charges God's prophets brought against Israel, with the conduct and character of these nations. If Israel exceeded Britain in gross idolatry, Britain hath exceeded Israel in daring infidelity, and atheism; in perjury, profaneness, and blasphemy; in contempt of God's word, neglect of God's ordinances, violation of God's sabbaths; and at least hath equalled Israel's ingratitude and hypocrisy.—Including the whole of our appendages, I fear we have immensely out-done them in shedding innocent blood, in oppressing the poor, the fatherless, and the widow; and in every species of detestable injustice, prompted by insatiable avarice, and protected from human vengeance, (as greatly suspected) by shameless bribery and venality.\* In pride, adultery, luxury, and

\* An eminent speaker in the house of commons observed, that God had punished us with the loss of one continent for the oppression exercised on the other. I fear for this, and other horrid scenes of wickedness, God hath much worse punishments in store for us; except national reformation, and national justice, executed on the culprits, prevent.



and all debauchery, their guilt bears, I apprehend, no proportion to ours.

But national guilt is only the accumulation of the sins of individuals: the measure fills fast, whilst every one contributes his large proportion: as a nation, we all have need to mourn over the whole; but each one should especially be humbled for his own sins. Calling then our attention from objects more distant, let us examine our own hearts and lives. What say your consciences, my brethren? Have you not helped to bring the nation low by iniquity? Have you not provoked God by your ungodliness and unrighteousness? Have you not forgotten God, been ungrateful for his mercies, profaned his sabbaths, slighted his ordinances, trampled on his law, despised or abused his gospel? Judge yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord? Personal repentance and humiliation before God, on account of our sins, as a part of our national guilt, and earnest prayers in that behalf, is a debt we owe our country, which may suffer in part for our offences, though we, as individuals, may be pardoned in respect of eternal punishment. God pardoned Manasseh; yet would not pardon Jerusalem the innocent blood he had shed.

For our sins, then, God hath brought us low: by a concurrence of counsels and events, we were engaged in a ruinous war with our American colonies. Our ancient enemies triumphed, hoping the time of our downfall was come, and expecting to share the spoil: four powerful nations in confederacy fought against us; none was found cordial in friendship, or prompt in bringing assistance. They practised,

practised, and prospered: our enterprizes were unsuccessful, our projects disconcerted, our hearts discouraged: the disasters of war wasted our soldiers, enormous expences drained off our riches; debts accumulated, taxes increased; our resources were nearly exhausted, commerce was discouraged, manufactures languished; many of the wealthy were impoverished, the poor were greatly distressed: our consequence was diminished, intestine discord prevailed; invasions were threatned, and dreaded; there was no prospect of peace on tolerable terms; the most fatal effects were apprehended to our civil and religious liberties, those best of earthly blessings. Thus low did a righteous God bring us for iniquity; yet, blessed be his name, in wrath he remembered mercy.

4. Then observe, “that he regarded our affliction “when he heard our cry.” Though he hath not restored us to our pristine prosperity, perhaps never may; yet hath he done great things for us in answer to our prayers.—We cried unto the Lord in our distress. We remember when in our national difficulties, from year to year, at the appointment of our governors, we met together to observe a solemn day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; the old and scriptural way of seeking help of God in public calamities. Doubtless multitudes grossly prevaricated with God in this matter, and will be one day reckoned with for their hypocrisy. On such occasions, I apprehend, it ever hath been so; never was any whole nation yet sincerely and truly penitent for sin, whatever may hereafter be. Nevertheless, there was a public honour put upon God and religion all over the land on those days:  
God



God was justified by us, in bringing calamities upon us; we acknowledged we deserved to be given over into the hands of our enemies: we disclaimed all confidence in an arm of flesh, craved help of God, deprecated his vengeance, implored his mercy, the continuance of our national privileges, and the restoration of the blessings of peace. Now impudence in sinning is one symptom of ripeness for destruction. When a nation declares its sin like Sodom, Sodom's doom approaches. But public condemnation of ourselves, and public justification of God in his severest judgments upon us, accompanied by public and general supplications to him for undeserved help, seem to indicate that though our measure of iniquity be large, 'tis not yet full. He who prolonged his patience towards Ahab, on account of his external humiliation, prolongs his patience towards us, in part on the same account. But now if we relapse, and grow more daring in our wickedness, the measure will soon be full, and there will be no remedy. May God avert this awful, this impending doom, from us.

However, on those days, there were, I trust, many tens of thousands of real christians of diverse denominations, unanimous, sincere, and earnest, in this important business. All are not "men of understanding in the times to know what Israel ought to do;" and all need exciting, instructing, and assisting in their duty. A fast proclaimed founded the alarm; many ministers resounded it from their pulpits; christians were informed of, and awakened to consider the public circumstances, their duty to God and their country, and excited  
and



and reminded to perform it. Great numbers in public assemblies, in private families, in secret retirements, were sincerely confessing and bewailing their own sins; sighing and mourning for the abominations of the land; and pleading with God for pardon, protection, deliverance, and peace. Many, we may hope, through God's blessing on the labours of his ministers, were on those days brought to true repentance; and, as true penitents, both then and afterwards joined sincerely in the general cry. Now if but two real disciples of Christ agree together on earth, touching any thing they shall ask of God, through the intercession of Jesus, it shall be done for them: how much more when such multitudes, with one consent, both on those days and at other times, sought deliverance and peace in earnest prayer, might we expect a gracious answer. Universal wickedness is another symptom, that a nation is ripe for destruction, when the Lord looketh for some to make intercession; and there are few, or none; but when many present themselves, unanimous and cordial in this blessed work, though he bring that nation low, he will not yet give it up.

For these reasons, I consider it my duty to bless God for putting such a thing into the heart of our sovereign, (for the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord) and I consider it as every christian's duty to observe such seasons with all earnestness.— We may easily over-value external religion, if we trust to it, and are proud of it: but, 'tis possible to under-value it; and we actually do so, if we do not vastly prefer it to open profaneness.

We are now assembled to return public thanks  
C for

for the mercies we then sought in public prayers; and it seemed therefore proper to have at *this* season, a peculiar eye to *those*. However, it suffices for my purpose, that we cried unto the Lord, and he heard us, whensoever our prayers were made.

For, 1. In the very critical time, he gave important success to our arms. Had the event of the sea-fight between our fleet under admiral Rodney, and the combined fleets, been as decisive in their favour, as it was in our's; and had the Spaniards carried their point at Gibraltar, instead of being so severely repulsed by general Eliott, the consequences might have been fatal. At best, our present low estate must have been much lower, if our existence as an independent kingdom had been preserved; if our civil and religious liberties had not been wrenched from us, or our happy island desolated by the horrors of war, and deluged with the blood of its inhabitants.

Let admirals and generals have their proper honour and reward: far be it from me to depreciate their characters, or envy their emoluments: they are worthy of them all from us, for whose security they expose themselves to danger. But let us not give them the glory which belongs to God. He inspires courage, he gives wisdom, he determines victory. Shall we not then render him our warmest thanksgivings for these seasonable and signal interpositions, in answer to the prayers we poured out in the day of our distress? Remember, my brethren, your anxiety, your apprehensions, your despondency, at that time; and ask your hearts, whether you have not cause for thankfulness? And  
whether



whether you have been thankful? At that stage of the war, we were evidently not struggling for dominion, but for national security, and equitable peace; which consideration disposes me more cheerfully to praise the Lord for thus answering our requests. And I think heaven and earth will condemn our ingratitude, if we do not as unanimously join in thanksgiving, as we did in supplication.

Then, 2. In consequence of these and other successes, peace was at length concluded. But what sort of a peace, some are ready to answer? Such a peace as is much better than such a war. Whether men did wisely or well in adjusting the articles, I determine not: but when we consider our national guilt, our national circumstances, our confederated foes, and exhausted finances, we must surely acknowledge that God hath done better by us, than either we deserved, or once expected; and this calls for grateful praise.—But some will say, 'tis so humiliating a peace, I cannot be satisfied with it, nor feel thankful for it. 'Tis true, God hath brought us low for our iniquity, both in respect of the extent of our dominions, and our national wealth and consequence; but if we be brought no lower, perhaps this very circumstance calls for thankfulness. Bad as the state of religion and morals is amongst us, had our wealth and honour increased, as it had done for some years past, probably matters had even now been much worse. Pride, ungodliness, sensuality, and luxury, had increased with increasing wealth and power, and probably would have increased. Had it been so, our destruction had advanced with hastier steps.

Perhaps our being brought low, and deprived in part of that provision we had made for our lusts, is the very means of prolonging our state, and delaying our ruin. And shall a christian murmur at this? Shall he refuse to be thankful for peace, and liberty, and security, because he doth not roll in wealth, nor is exalted in honour as heretofore? But to be more particular;

1. We are bound to thank God for putting a stop to the effusion of human blood. The value of man's life is great—of man's soul infinitely greater. He who duly ponders this, must consider war, though in some cases necessary, in all cases horrible: nor can he be other than shocked with reflecting on the thousands of his fellow-creatures slaughtered in battle, and their souls hurried into eternity; many of them, most of them, 'tis to be feared, in the full career of unrepented sin. When a victory makes way for peace, I can rejoice in it; though not without melancholy reflections on the fatal consequences, perhaps to thousands, mingling with my joy. Otherwise, the life of an American, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, or an Hollander, is, in my estimation, of equal value with the life of a Briton: even successful war excites my lamentation; and the return of peace is matter of thanksgiving, as I am a man, and a christian, even though I should not, as an Englishman, approve of the conditions thereof. “Send peace in our time, O Lord.”—“That it may please thee to give unity, peace, and concord to all nations,” are requests, which surely no true christian can hesitate in adopting: nor should any christian refuse his tribute of praise and gratitude, when such requests are granted.



granted. Many, from selfish motives, wish for war; but can he, who has God's law written in his heart; even this law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," wish the slaughter of his fellow-men, for the sake of his own emolument?

2. We have cause to thank God for stopping the effusion of the blood of our friends and relatives.—How many, during the war, mourned over slaughtered fathers, brothers, sons, relatives, and friends? How many weeping eyes for the dead! How many anxious hearts about the living! Ought we not to thank God for relieving us in this cause of anxiety and grief?

3. We are bound to thank God for preserving our land from becoming the seat of war. Many feared it; many of you, my fellow-christians, feared it, and prayed against it. Whether you had sufficient cause for your apprehensions, I decide not. But assuredly our felicity, in this respect, both heretofore and in this conjuncture, is the gift of God, and demands our gratitude. He spread the protecting ocean around us; He raised us to our present naval power; He gives skill, hardiness, and courage, to our seamen; He gives victory to our fleets; He awes our enemies to a distance; He silences popular insurrections, and prevents civil war. For these mercies, praise ye the Lord.—The loss of men and money we know: but war, horrible war, as a nation, we know not, or we could not fail to prize such a distinguishing favour. May we never learn to know its worth, by its loss.

4. We are bound to bless God for breaking the  
strong

strong confederacy formed against us. Arguing from former events, we had little to fear from any of our enemies separately. When two heretofore have united, we have had countenance and assistance from the others; or they have stood neuter. But in this conjuncture, four powerful nations were confederated against us, and thus excited our just and melancholy apprehensions. God hath broken in pieces this formidable combination, and 'tis not at all probable that it should speedily be renewed. Thus, by the peace, though humiliating, the urgent cause of terror is happily removed. The combination is broken, and we are delivered, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. For this, my brethren, praise and bless the Lord, who maketh the counsels of the people to be of none effect.

5. Though reduced, we are still preserved an independent kingdom: our laws and liberties, civil and religious, are still continued to us: we dwell in peace and safety, and may yet meet together to worship God according to our conscience. If you love the Lord, if you love his house and ordinances, then praise the Lord; and let not satan, by tempting you to repine over the remembrance of our diminished grandeur and consequence, prevail with you to withhold the revenue of thanks, so justly due to God. Remember, that " 'tis of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." Shall we not then praise him for dealing with us so much better than our deservings?

6. Our trade and manufactures, on which the affluence of the wealthy, and the subsistence of the indigent, so much depend, are far from ruined; they revive, and in many places flourish. And, if renewed



renewed provocations do not cause the Lord to command fresh judgments, we may hope gradually to recover some part at least of our former prosperity. Indeed, amongst you, and perhaps in some other places and manufactures,\* no remarkable amendment hath taken place: but forget not, that during the war, things grew worse every year. Had not God answered your prayers in sending peace, how much worse had your trade been ere this? Since the peace it hath somewhat recovered. Therefore, both on your own account, and your countrymen's, forget not to praise the Lord for the past, and that will prove the best means of procuring greater things in future.

7. The exhausting, intolerable expences of the war, are now ceased.—You will say, our taxes still increase, and I feel no relief from the peace, but additional burdens imposed yearly; how then can I be thankful? Yet consider, these very taxes are imposed to pay the interest of the sums borrowed during the war, and of those borrowed since the war, to pay off its heavy arrears.—Had the war still continued, if we had not been overpowered by the united forces of our enemies, the intolerable expence must have ruined us. The present grievous taxes may teach thee to bless God for peace: for had the war continued, thy present heavy burden would have been made vastly heavier; therefore, silence thy murmurings, and join with me in praising the Lord.

Now, then, I would proceed to make some further, and more general, improvement of the subject.

I. You

\* The thread lace manufacture.

1. You may learn from hence, that the Lord is awfully holy in hating, and impartially just in punishing, sin: yet is he good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them who penitently and heartily call upon him. Tremble then, stout-hearted sinner: that God whose law thou hast broken, whose gospel thou hast neglected, whose grace thou despisest, and whose justice thou defiest, is a consuming fire, a jealous God, vengeance belongs unto him, and he will repay. He, whose justice and power brings nations so low for iniquity, can easily, and will certainly, bring thee low, even into hell, except thou repent, and believe the gospel.

Be encouraged, poor trembling sinner, fear not to call upon this gracious God: return to him, in his appointed way, who now kindly invites thee; and never did tender parent more cordially and affectionately receive a returning prodigal, than God will welcome thee.

2. You see that this harmony of perfect justice and holiness, with rich and plenteous mercy, which is the perfection of beauty, the loveliness of God, doth require the interposition of the divine mediator, and the infinitely valuable satisfaction of his death; otherwise, every exertion of pardoning mercy, and love to sinners, would imply a defect of justice, and imperfection of holiness.—'Tis only in the person of Jesus, Emanuel, that this harmonious glory of God can be seen. In him God's law is magnified, justice satisfied, holiness manifested, and mercy exercised, and God appears a just God and a Saviour. Through this mediator,  
God



God dwelling in human nature, even sinful nations are dealt with in mercy. And, poor sinner, if thou receive not Christ, and his atonement, if thou come not into the presence of God, through the intercession of his Son, thy dependance on God's mercy, but not in God's way, will be found unwarranted presumption. God will not dishonour himself, by being unjustly merciful to please a rebel. Come then, but remember Christ saith, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the father, but by me."

3. Fear no enemies to our national prosperity, but iniquity. God spares us a little longer. If reformation take place, we shall be preserved. Otherwise, our doom is not far off. Seek, then, by prayer, each of you, for mercy and grace, through the intercession of Jesus, and thus aim at personal reformation. Repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Use your influence and authority in your families, connexions, and dependances, to promote their reformation: pray for those you cannot influence: 'tis the duty you owe your country; 'tis the duty the occasion calls for.—Suffer then the word of exhortation. As you value your national security and prosperity, as you value your precious souls, be not slothful in this work. Were all, were half, were a tenth, thus minded, glorious effects would follow.—Despise not the day of small things; yield not to discouragement; arise, and be doing, and the Lord will be with you.

4. Did you sigh, and mourn, and pray, sincerely, during the late calamities? And hath God heard *your* prayers? Then be sure you thank him for it; and admire his condescension that he would notice *your* poor, defective prayers. Forget not to pay

the vows you made unto him in the day of your distress; but especially, take courage to pray more abundantly for the time to come. Many are tempted to neglect the blessed duty of intercession almost entirely; our prayers, say they, are so weak, we scarce know how to pray for ourselves; it seems presumption to think our prayers can do any good. One soldier is a feeble defence to the nation; but large armies consist of single soldiers: should each forsake his post, because his single help is inconsiderable, we fall a prey to our enemies; but when each preserves and maintains his post, we are well protected. Our weapons, my fellow-soldiers, are earnest prayers: that christian that helps not the cause of his church and nation against the enemies of each, by his prayers, deserts his post, and leaves, for his part, the coast defenceless. One has as good right and reason to desert his post as another: if all desert, if none remain to make intercession, we are defenceless indeed. But if each christian abound in this duty, our cause shall certainly prosper. Pray then, my brethren, each of you, under this persuasion, that you are one of a numerous army of supplicants dispersed all over the land; and unitedly intreat the Lord to preserve peace, to revive religion, to reform our manners. Intreat the Lord to bless your king and his family, with all the blessings of time and eternity; and to continue them a blessing to these lands for generations to come. Intreat the Lord to impart his grace to our princes and nobles, that they may improve their greatness, wealth, and influence, to promote and adorn true religion. Pray that magistrates may be indeed a terror to evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well: that ministers of the gospel may be endowed with knowledge



knowledge and wisdom, judgment and experience, boldness and faithfulness, humility and holiness, zeal and love. Did you pray more for us, we should live more holy, preach more powerfully, and be blessed more abundantly with extensive usefulness. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest: pray for the conversion of wicked clergymen, those blind leaders of the blind: pray for the rising generation of ministers, that they may be furnished and prepared for the work and charge, that is about to devolve on them: pray for the places of education of our youth, public and private; that men may thence come forth qualified, and disposed to serve God in church and state; and that the rising generation may be trained up to godliness and honesty: pray that bigotry, superstition, error, and *real* enthusiasm, may cease; that offences and divisions may be prevented; that all true christians may love one another with a pure heart, fervently; may adorn the gospel by exemplary lives; be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and strive together for the faith of the gospel. Pray for your children, relations, neighbours, benefactors, and enemies, (be sure not to forget them.) Pray for the spread of the gospel, the fall of antichrist, the calling of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and the universal prevalence of true religion. Finally, my brethren, pray for the unworthy author of this exhortation, that both by his life and doctrine he may set forth the true and lively word of God, and when death comes, may be found so doing.

5. Perhaps, at the time alluded to, you did not heartily pray, but have since been taught to pray: well then, you have double cause of thankfulness: you partake of many blessings in answer to prayer,

though you never joined in seeking them by prayer. Be not then now negligent in thanksgiving, though you were in praying; and henceforth forget not to unite your requests for national mercies, with those of that army of supplicants, of diverse denominations, who are indeed the bulwark of the land.

Finally. Dost thou continue impenitent and ungodly? I fear I shall exhort thee to gratitude in vain: if thou neglectest prayer, I fear thou wilt have as little heart to praise and thanksgiving, though thou hast abundant cause. But two hints I will leave with thee: though thou despisest spiritual blessing, thou valuest temporal blessings inordinately. In answer to prayer, these are continued to our land, and to thee among the rest. Do not then revile and ill-treat thy praying neighbours, to whom thou art indebted for thy share in national security. And remember, that although, through the intercession of others, thou mayest escape temporal calamities through life; yet, death will come shortly; and then, if thou be found impenitent, the most tremendous earthly judgments, in comparison of thy eternal portion, will be known to be but light afflictions, and but for a moment. "The hand of the Lord," "shall find out all his enemies, his right hand shall find out them that hate him. He shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of his anger." — "Seek then the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." 7 DE 65

F I N I S.



